34%

Increase in the number of eligible women served by the WWC program from 2008 to 2011<sup>1</sup>

17,776

Number of women screened in fiscal year 2011. This respresents the highest number ever screened in the program<sup>1</sup>

2.7x

Care for WWC women with invasive breast cancers cost 2.7 times more than those with less severe breast cancers treated through the Breast and Cervical Cancer Medicaid Program (BCCP)<sup>2</sup>

4x

Care for WWC women with invasive cervical cancers cost 4 times more than those with less severe cervical cancers treated through the BCCP Medicaid Program<sup>2</sup>

Early detection saves money and lives

## Women's Wellness Connection Report

Nearly 1 in 4 low-income, uninsured Colorado women are screened for breast and cervical cancer through Women's Wellness Connection

Undetected breast and cervical cancers threaten the lives of many Colorado women. Breast cancer is the most common and cervical cancer is the 13th most common cancer diagnosed. Breast cancer is the leading cause of death for women in Colorado, with one in seven Colorado women afflicted at some time in their lives.<sup>3</sup>

Prevention of breast and cervical cancer deaths is best achieved through early detection and treatment. When these cancers are detected in early stages, 98 percent of women survive breast cancer and 96 percent survive cervical cancer.<sup>3</sup> For more than 20 years, the Women's Wellness Connection (WWC) has provided, promoted and ensured free breast and cervical cancer screening for low-income, uninsured women in Colorado and connected them to treatment and case management resources.

WWC in Action
Looking Towards the Future
WWC Success Story





# WWC in Action

## Working so that all Colorado women receive breast and cervical cancer screenings

#### I am eligible for the WWC program because:

- I am between 40 and 64 years old
- I make less than 250% of the Federal Poverty Level
- I am lawfully present
- I don't have insurance to cover my cancer screenings

Figure 1

What we do: During fiscal year 2010-11, Women's Wellness Connection provided cancer screening services to 17,776 women at an average cost of \$324 per woman. Of those screened, 302 were diagnosed with a breast or cervical cancer and referred to Medicaid for treatment through the BCCP Medicaid Program. Only women diagnosed with cancer through WWC are granted access to this Medicaid program for treatment per state program rules.

Who we serve: Despite advances in early detection and treatment of cancer, the burden of these cancers disproportionately affects members of certain racial/ethnic groups with low socioeconomic status.<sup>3</sup> These populations are diagnosed with cancer at later stages. WWC reduces this cancer burden by providing free breast and cervical cancer screenings to low-income, uninsured women who represent these disparate populations in Colorado.

**How we are funded:** WWC has provided free breast and cervical cancer screening services for more than 20 years with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state Amendment 35 tobacco tax excise funds.

#### WWC Serves a Racially and Ethnically Diverse Population

Nearly one in two women served by the program is Hispanic, Black, Asian or American Indian.<sup>4</sup> In comparison, one in four Colorado women age 40 to 64 years are of a racial or ethnic minority.<sup>5</sup>

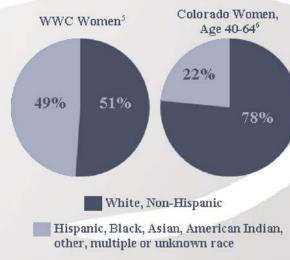
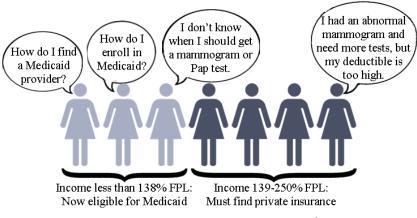


Figure 2

# Looking Towards the Future

## **Ensuring Low-Income Women Receive Quality Care through National Health Reform**

Potential Effects of Health Care Reform on Women Currently Eligible for WWC Program

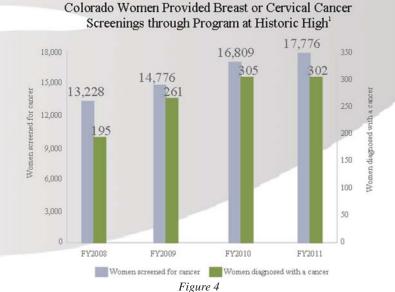


Each figure represents 10,000 Colorado women<sup>†</sup> FPL = Federal Poverty Level

Figure 3

Women's Wellness Connection will continue to play a critical role through implementation of national health reform (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act). WWC can help by providing cancer screenings to women who remain uninsured, enrolling newly eligible women in Medicaid, providing diagnostic follow-up for women with high deductible insurance plans and educating women on the importance of routine cancer screening. Figure 3 shows just some of the ways the program can continue to serve lowincome Colorado women.

The Women's Wellness Connection is needed by Colorado's low-income, uninsured women now more than ever. Over the past four years, the number of women served by the program has grown by 34% — that's an increase of more than 4,500 women served from fiscal year 2008 to 2011¹ In addition, each year since 2008 represents a higher number of women served, despite the program's 20+ year history in Colorado.



# WWC Success Story



### JoeAnn Brown: Women's Wellness Connection Cancer Survivor

**Some say life happens while we are busy making other plans.** After successfully raising my children, completing two master's degrees and developing a nonprofit serving children at risk, I volunteered for AmeriCorps VISTA and moved to Colorado to continue working with poor families.

Then, in June 2009, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Faced with the inability to find a job in a down economy and the frightening realization that I had breast cancer but no medical coverage, my priorities shifted to my health.

I remember the Friday night I noticed a sizable lump in my right breast. I had no money or health care coverage. So, I contacted the Tri-County Health Department on Monday morning and was referred to WWC. I was worried not only by the possible medical outcome, but also about my inability to pay for whatever care I might need.

The folks at Tri-County set everything in motion — initial exam, mammogram and consultation. A WWC Coordinator arranged for me to receive BCCP Medicaid and referred me to a Patient Navigator who, in turn, helped me select a medical team that included a Medical Oncologist, Surgical Oncologist and Radiologist.

On Dec. 8, 2009, after six chemotherapy treatments, a lumpectomy and six cycles of radiation treatments, I received a letter from my radiologist stating "no mammographic evidence of cancer."

That day I hit the restart button of my life. I am convinced that without the services of the WWC, my story may have had a different ending. I am forever grateful.

I have chosen not to be defined by what I do. I have recently added professional trucking to my resume and am enjoying the adventure of the open road. My escape from cancer has afforded me the freedom to see this wonderful country through a new vantage point. I am spending time overcoming fears, adding value to my existence and feeling truly blessed for the opportunities I have thanks to WWC.

1 WWC Program women screened, FY2008 and FY2011

<sup>3</sup> Colorado Central Cancer Registry, 2005-2009

<sup>4</sup> WWC clients served in FY 2011

<sup>5</sup> Census 2010, Colorado women age 40-64 by race and ethnicity

<sup>6</sup> 30,000 uninsured Colorado women age 40-64 were between 138% and 250% of poverty in 2009. 2009 Health Insurance Coverage Status for States

JoeAnn Brown PHR, MBA, MHRD

For more information, please contact Women's Wellness Connection 4300 Cherry Creek Drive South Denver, CO 80246

Telephone: 303-692-2511

websites: www.womenswellnessconnection.org

www.cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Average cost based on 778 women with at least one BCCP Medicaid claim from July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011. Diagnosis of invasive breast or cervical cancer versus other qualifying BCCP cancer diagnosis identified through program database, eCaST.